



The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—"Saving Lives: Biomedical and Traditional Healing Collaboration on HIV/AIDS"

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Traditional, Complementary and Alternative Medicine at NRMSM

- ✱ African Health Care Systems (AHCS),
- ✱ Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM—Ayurveda, Sowa Rigpa, Unani-Tibb, Siddha),
- ✱ Chinese Systems of Medicine (Traditional Chinese Medicine, Japanese etc.),
- ✱ and other traditional, complementary and alternative systems—eg. Homeopathy, homotoxicology, energy medicines, etc.
- ✱ Dept. Family Medicine lectures to undergraduate and graduate medical students; various research initiatives under development



African Health Care Systems Research Network (Faculty Approved)

- ✱ 80% of South Africans see TH's
- ✱ Estimated 200,000 TH's in RSA
- ✱ AHCS Headed by Dr. Nceba Gqaleni, Deputy Dean
- ✱ MOU signed October 2003 between NRMSM and 1) KZN Traditional Healers Council incl. Ethekwini THC, 2) Mwelela Kweliphesheya,
- ✱ 3) Umgogodla Wesizwe Trust
- ✱ HIV/AIDS Task Team from 11 KZN Health Districts Established
- ✱ Two US State Dept. Funded Workshops (very fruitful discussions)



1st Major AHCS Project: PEPFAR Funding Approval for “Saving Lives: Biomedical and Traditional Healing Collaboration on HIV/AIDS”

- ✱ Pilot Program -- Focus on Ethekekwini District
- ✱ Train and Equip 250 TH's in Year 1 in 5 One-Week Workshops (Ethekekwini has perhaps 10,000, of whom over 2000 are currently registered with the TH Council)
- ✱ Participating TH's Must be:
 - ✱ Nominated by Ethekekwini TH Council
 - ✱ Registered with KZN TH Council
 - ✱ Trained in HIV/AIDS Awareness
 - ✱ Trained in VCT/HBC
 - ✱ Trained in ARV Awareness
- ✱ Posting of Trained TH's at Four Global Fund Workplace Clinics



Project Components (1)

- ✦ Joint HIV/AIDS Clinical Guideline Development, using
 - ✦ Family Medicine Guidelines (lots of similarities with TH approach)
 - ✦ Ethekwini Health Guidelines
 - ✦ KZN DOH Guidelines
 - ✦ New formalization of TH Practices (informal, unwritten guidelines exist)
 - ✦ Focus groups, mock consultations, collaboration between professionals

Project Components (2)

★ 2-Way Referral System Development

- Informal system already exists, largely one-direction (from TH's to Clinics)
- Patients move back and forth, particularly seeking “alternative” diagnosis when testing positive for HIV
- Trad. Healers already send referral letters to clinics
- Trad. Healers asking for at least basic information back from biomedical team: what were patients given in terms of treatment
- Trad. Healers can make big impact on patient compliance and OI management with good collaboration from biomedical
- Confidentiality issues must be clarified
- Close Collaboration with DoH teams under development



Project Components (3)

★ Medical Kit Supply

- ★ Most TH's practice in resource constrained settings
- ★ See on average 5 HIV+ patients a day
- ★ Most lack even rubber gloves
- ★ Plan to supply modified version of KZN DOH Home-based Care Kit (included in Project Budget)



Project Components (4)

☀ Introduction of Record Keeping Systems

- Underlies success of entire project
- Brand new concept to most traditional healers
- Issues of literacy—requirement for pictograms and check boxes, may experiment with tape recording as well
- Should deeply and broadly improve our understanding of traditional healer practices
- Should dramatically improve the chances of success for the long term collaboration between practitioners of the two systems
- Already agreed to and advocated by the Trad. Healer Councils



Project Components (5)

- ★ VCT Strategy Development

- Healers are expert counselors
- Already involved in pre- and post-test counseling
- Already involved in issues of patient compliance
- Have themselves raised the issues of potential interactions between ARV's and muthis
- Are not currently allowed to legally test in South Africa (though other countries in Africa permit lay people to test)
- Medical School team is working on this issue



Project Components (6)

- ★ Development of More Effective Prevention Messages and Behavioral Counseling

- ★ Patients listen well to what healers tell them (part of culture, divination effects, “seeing” patient condition without being told, etc)
- ★ Healers affirm they can work together with us to develop more effective behavior change strategies
- ★ Many cultural issues involved because of traditional African beliefs in spells, etc.
- ★ Healers available 24 hours a day—real old style family doctors, community doctors



Project Components (6)

- ✱ Healers have to help the patients while they are on the waiting list for ART
- ✱ Healers give the patients herbal remedies to boost their immune system
- ✱ Healers advise patients on good nutrition
- ✱ Advice on Positive Living:
 - behavior change
 - Stop using drugs
 - Stick to one partner
 - Use condoms
- ✱ Good herbal remedies for:
- ✱ Boosting immune system
- ✱ Appetite stimulation leading to weight gain
- ✱ Some patients are able to return to work
- ✱ Oral thrush
- ✱ Skin rashes
- ✱ STI's
- ✱ Diarrhea



- December 15, 2004: Amb. Fraser (US State Dept.) , Mr. Makahtini (Mwelela and NRMSM), Dr. Hartzell (NRMSM), Makhosi Ntuli (KZN THC), Makhosi Bhengu (KZN & Ethekekwini THC), Makhosi Nkomo (Ethekekwini THC), Amb. Tobias (PEPFAR)

THANK YOU

